

method of Field class 46 to set the appropriate attributes on each of the newly created fields. The resulting output message is returned from the serviceMain method and, ultimately, from the Launch method of BusinessService class 48.

5 The presently preferred embodiments of the business services layer 16 are designed to provide a foundation, or framework for building e-commerce architectures. Building of messages and extracting data from messages is simplified through leveraging XML based messaging with the business services layer 16. The business services layer 16 provides a design pattern for building business service applications using the DOM class and XML technology while avoiding exposure to most of the complexities otherwise associated therewith. By confining the configuration requirements to Message class 44 and Field class 46, the creation of XML-based business service applications is relatively easy. Further, changes and additions to business service applications built around the framework provided by business services layer 16 may be accomplished with relatively minor changes to Message class 44 and Field class 46. The conveniences associated with using the business services layer 16 allows simplification in transferring messages between the front-end systems layer 14 and the back-end systems layer 18 within a business services application without the complexities normally associated with XML based applications.

20 It is to be understood that a wide range of changes and modifications to the embodiments described above will be apparent to those skilled in the art and are contemplated. It is therefore intended that the foregoing detailed description be regarded as illustrative, rather than limiting, and that it be understood that it is the following claims, including all equivalents, that are intended to define the spirit and scope of the invention.